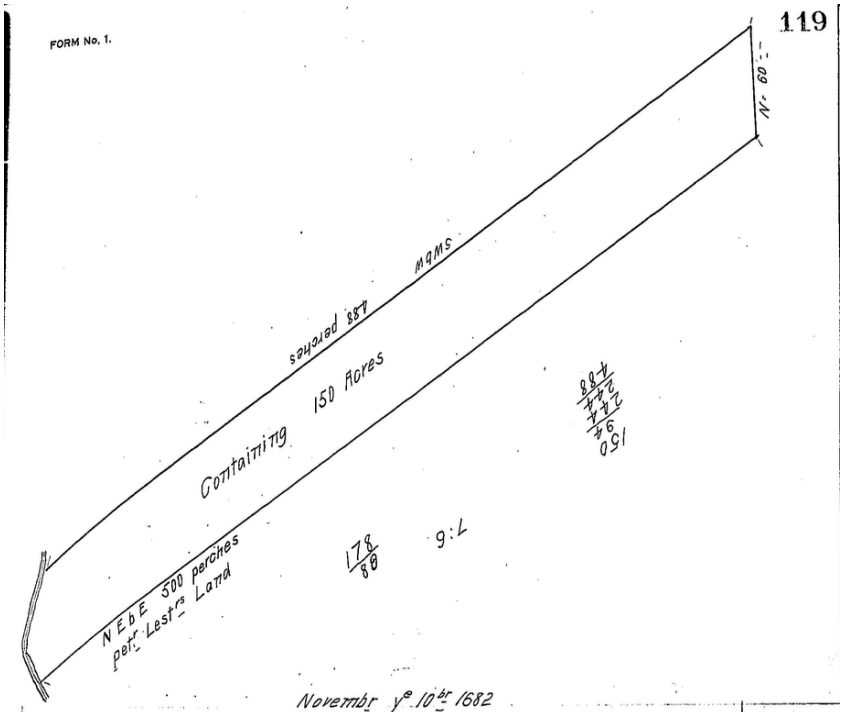
“Jane Lownes and Her 17th-Century Cave-Home: Springfield, Pennsylvania”
By: Carla Welsh (nee Seitz)
July 30, 2026

Howard Pyle’s “A Pennsylvania Cave-Dwelling” (created circa 1901). Pyle created this illustration to show what he imagined Pennsylvania’s early settler “cave-homes” may have looked like. The image was published in Harper’s Monthly Magazine as part of Woodrow Wilson’s Colonies and Nation. This is a colorized edit of the original by the author.

One of the most well known “cave-homes” was that of Jane Lownes, the 'Pioneer Mother' of Springfield Township, Chester County (now Delaware County), Pennsylvania.

About 1682, Jane Lownes and her children reached the shores of the New World as Quakers fleeing England for religious freedom. It is not known whether her husband died in jail in England or at sea during the voyage. Appearing in the land records in her own name, Jane became the first female land purchaser in Springfield and one of the earliest female landholders in the entire colony of Pennsylvania.

A survey conducted in 1682 by Charles Ashcom laid out 150 acres for her. A note from Surveyor General Richard Land ordered the survey to be done free of charge because she was poor. Upon arrival, the cave of Jane Lownes was built.



November y^e 10^br 1682

Layd out for Jane Lowne 150 Acres of Land beginning at Petr. Lesters Corner tree upon Crum creek Running 500 Perches and to Peter Lesters other Corner tree from thence N 60 perches to A Red oke from thence S.W b W. to A Chestnut tree by Crum Creek from thence A Long the Creek side one severall Corses to the first bounder By mee Charles Ashcom

R. L. let this be done T. H.

free she is poor: & a purchase

~~Survey not in~~

IN TESTIMONY that the above is a copy of the original remaining on file in the Department of Internal Affairs of Pennsylvania, made conformably to an Act of Assembly approved the 16th day of February, 1833, I have hereunto set my Hand and caused the Seal of said Department to be affixed at Harrisburg, this Twenty Seventh day of May 1909

Henry Houck

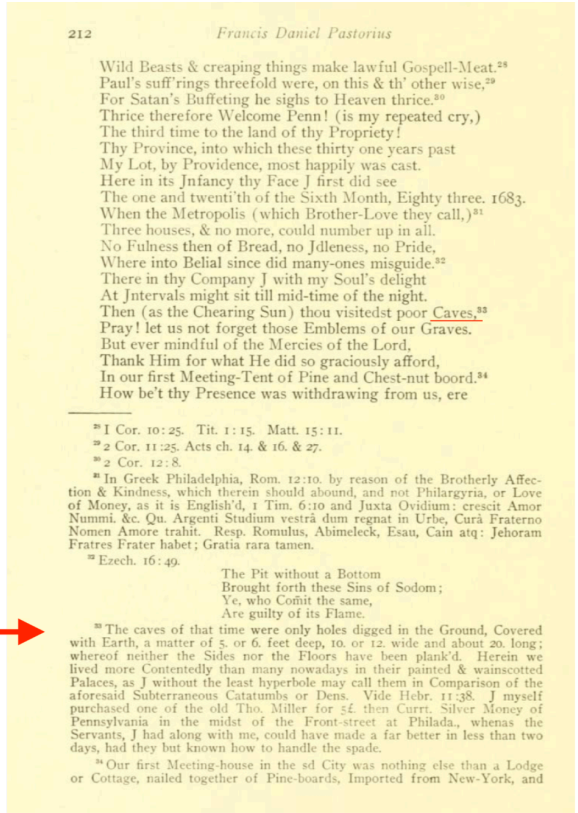
Secretary of Internal Affairs.

Recopied Survey, PHMC. November 10, 1682. 150 acres surveyed to Jane Lownes in today's Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, in the Crum Creek region.

Upon arriving in the New World, many settlers built primitive dwellings they called "caves." These served as temporary shelters until cabins or modest stone houses could be constructed. The shelters were partly below ground and partly above ground, often dug into the side of a hill or river bluff.

One of the clearest firsthand descriptions of Pennsylvania's early settler "caves" comes from Francis Daniel Pastorius (1651–c.1720), founder of Germantown, Pennsylvania (now Philadelphia). Writing in the late 1600s about Pennsylvania's earliest years, Pastorius wrote:

"*The caves of that time were only holes digged in the Ground, Covered with Earth, a matter of 5 or 6 feet deep, 10 or 12 wide and about 20 long; whereof neither the Sides nor the Floors have been plank'd. Herein we lived more Contentedly than many nowadays in their painted & wainscotted Palaces, as I without the least hyperbole may call them in Comparison of the aforesaid Subterraneous Catatumbs or Dens. Vide Hebr. 11:38. I myself purchased one of the old Tho. Miller for -,£. then Currt. Silver Money of Pennsylvania in the midst of the Front-Street at Philada., whenas the Servants, I had along with me, could have made a far better in less than two days, had they but known how to handle the spade*."[1]



212 *Francis Daniel Pastorius*

Wild Beasts & creaping things make lawful Gospell-Meat.[28]
Paul's suff'rings threefold were, on this & th' other wise,[29]
For Satan's Buffeting he sighs to Heaven thrice.[30]
Thrice therefore Welcome Penn! (is my repeated cry,)
The third time to the land of thy Propriety!
Thy Province, into which these thirty one years past
My Lot, by Providence, most happily was cast.
Here in its Jnfancy thy Face J first did see
The one and twenti'th of the Sixth Month, Eighty three. 1683.
When the Metropolis (which Brother-Love they call,)[31]
Three houses, & no more, could number up in all.
No Fulness then of Bread, no Jdleness, no Pride,
Where into Belial since did many-ones misguide.[32]
There in thy Company J with my Soul's delight
At Jntervals might sit till mid-time of the night.
Then (as the Chearing Sun) thou visitedst poor Caves,[33]
Pray! let us not forget those Emblems of our Graves.
But ever mindful of the Mercies of the Lord,
Thank Him for what He did so graciously afford,
In our first Meeting-Tent of Pine and Chest-nut boord.[34]
How be't thy Presence was withdrawing from us, ere

[28] I Cor. 10:25. Tit. 1:15. Matt. 15:11.
[29] 2 Cor. 11:25. Acts ch. 14. & 16. & 27.
[30] 2 Cor. 12:8.
[31] In Greek Philadelphia, Rom. 12:10. by reason of the Brotherly Affection & Kindness, which therein should abound, and not Philargyria, or Love of Money, as it is English'd, 1 Tim. 6:10 and Juxta Ovidium: crescit Amor Nummi. &c. Qu. Argenti Studium vestrâ dum regnat in Urbe, Curâ Fraterno Nomen Amore trahit. Resp. Romulus, Abimeleck, Esau, Cain atq: Jehoram Fratres Frater habet; Gratia rara tamen.
[32] Ezech. 16:49.

The Pit without a Bottom
Brought forth these Sins of Sodom;
Ye, who Comit the same,
Are guilty of its Flame.

[33] The caves of that time were only holes digged in the Ground, Covered with Earth, a matter of 5. or 6. feet deep, 10. or 12. wide and about 20. long; whereof neither the Sides nor the Floors have been plank'd. Herein we lived more Contentedly than many nowadays in their painted & wainscotted Palaces, as J without the least hyperbole may call them in Comparison of the aforesaid Subterraneous Catatumbs or Dens. Vide Hebr. 11:38. J myself purchased one of the old Tho. Miller for 5£ then Currt. Silver Money of Pennsylvania in the midst of the Front-street at Philada., whenas the Servants, J had along with me, could have made a far better in less than two days, had they but known how to handle the spade.
[34] Our first Meeting-house in the sd City was nothing else than a Lodge or Cottage, nailed together of Pine-boards, Imported from New-York, and

Learned, "The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius" (1908):

"The caves of that time were only holes in the Ground, Covered with Earth, a matter of 5 or 6 feet deep, 10 or 12 wide and about 20 long, whereof neither the Sides nor the Floors have been plank'd. Herein we live more contentedly than many nowadays in their painted and wainscotted Palaces…"

This is Pastorius's account of the cave dwellings occupied by Philadelphia's earliest settlers (written probably 1690s, or early 1700s).

[1] Marion Dexter Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius, Founder of Germantown* (1908), p. 212.

Per Minutes Book C, commencing about the year of 1685, in concern with the Philadelphia region, William Penn ordered everyone out of the caves within two months' time, because the caves were becoming brothels and places of overt intoxication.[2]

This was not particular to Pennsylvania. The author's 7th great-grandfather, Mordecai Andrews (1664–1736), built a cave into the sandstone hillside around 1699 during the construction of his home in Tuckerton, New Jersey, known as the "1699 Andrews-Bartlett Homestead." Leah Blackman, a distant cousin to the author, described the caves in her book, *History of Little Egg Harbor Township* (1880) as:

"*... the caves were dug in the ground like a cellar, and walled with cedar logs and covered with hewn timber of the same material*."[3]

The cave-site of Jane Lownes was somewhere on the properties where St. Kevin's and Springfield Hospital now stand along Sproul Road in Springfield, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. In 1789, Jane's descendants erected a marker at the site.

Original photo of the Jane Lownes cave marker while it was still in its original location. Photo obtained by the author from the Springfield Historical Society's binders at the Springfield Library.

[2] William Henry Egle, *Minutes of the Board of Property of the Province of Pennsylvania* (1893), vol. 1, pp. 10-20.
[3] *Proceedings, Constitution, By-Laws, List of Members of the Surveyor's Association of West New Jersey*, *With Historical and Biographical Sketches Relating to New Jersey*. Leah Blackman's book is in the back of this book. She mentions the caves several times throughout her book.

Original photo of the Jane Lownes cave marker while it was still in its original location. Photo obtained by the author from the Springfield Historical Society's binders at the Springfield Library.

In the 1940s, Edward Walsh became the property owner of the St. Kevin's area. He donated the cave marker to local historian James M. Davis and had the site filled in beneath his driveway. Davis later conducted historical tours to the area. In 1964, he was interviewed by the Delaware County Daily Times, and the article stated that the cave site had been "filled in many years ago, under the driveway leading to the home of Edward J. Walsh, about 400 yards off Sproul Road and south of St. Kevin's Rectory."

22 FEB 1964, Delaware County Daily Times

Springfield Museum 'Sentimental'

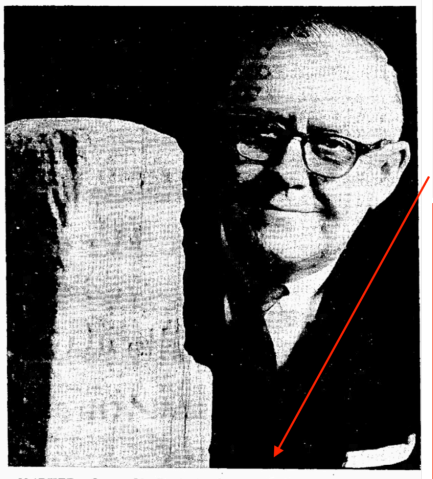
Holds Intimate History

James Davis Is Curator

By ARDEN SKIDMORE
Daily Times Staff Writer

"It's a sentimental museum. Things are all tied in with our people."

That's the way James Milburn Davis describes the Springfield Township Historical Museum.



MARKER—James M. Davis is shown with the stone marker which for many years stood at the site of a Springfield cave where Jane Lownes and her children lived one winter. The pioneer mother was believed to be Springfield's first white settler. Filled in many years ago, the Lownes cave site is under the driveway leading to the home of Edward J. Walsh, about 400 yards off Sproul Road and south of St. Kevin's Rectory. Davis is the museum curator.

grammar and history books

James M Davis used to run historical tours to the Jane Lownes Cave-site, while the marker was still in the ground. This article states the site was filled in under the driveway leading to the home of Edward J. Walsh, about 400 yards off Sproul Road and south of St. Kevin's Rectory.

Henry Graham Ashmead, author of "History of Delaware County," wrote that the cave location was 100 yards back from Sproul Road, but it appears Ashmead was never personally at the site, because he included a transcription of the marker which he worded the transcription wrong; thus, he must have never seen it in person. But, James M Davis did go to the site in person.

400 yards back from Sproul would lead you to the furthest home in the back (there are three homes, all with the 200 West Sproul Road address, though the 2 homes in the back are not used as homes I think, but are part of the St. Kevin's community). The home the furthest in the back is on the border which meets the golf course, and yes, a sloped hill exists, which can be seen at the 400 yard line back from Sproul and behind the Springfield Hospital Back Parking Garage.

400 yards equals about 0.227 miles. The author has visited the area and measured the distance. Of the three homes located back there, all with the same address (but not all used as homes), this measurement leads to the home furthest to the rear. Moving south of that home and following the 400 yard line brings us to the area behind the Springfield Hospital parking garage and to a sloped hill at the border of the Springfield Country Club golf course.

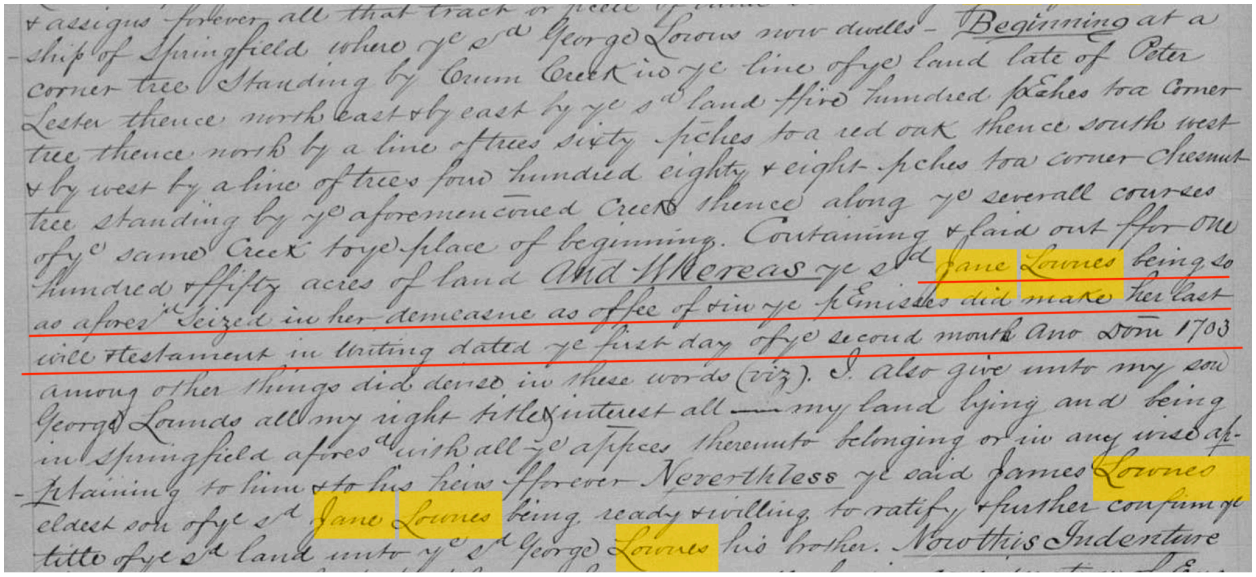
Aerial images from the 1930s through the 1960s show several paths across this property where driveways could once have existed. Over time, the recollections of local historians and Lownes descendants began to differ. Some said the cave-site was on the St. Kevin's property, while others believed it was on land later occupied by Springfield Hospital. Today, the exact location is lost.

Photo taken by the author in 2021 of the cave marker in the lobby of the Springfield Township Building, Powell Road, Springfield, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

Jane Lownes wrote her last will and testament on the 1st Day of the 2nd Month, 1703. Although the original will has not been located, it is referenced in a 1716 Deed of Release from James Lownes to George Lownes.[4] The Philadelphia will indexes also list the probate of a "Jane Lowndes" in Book C for

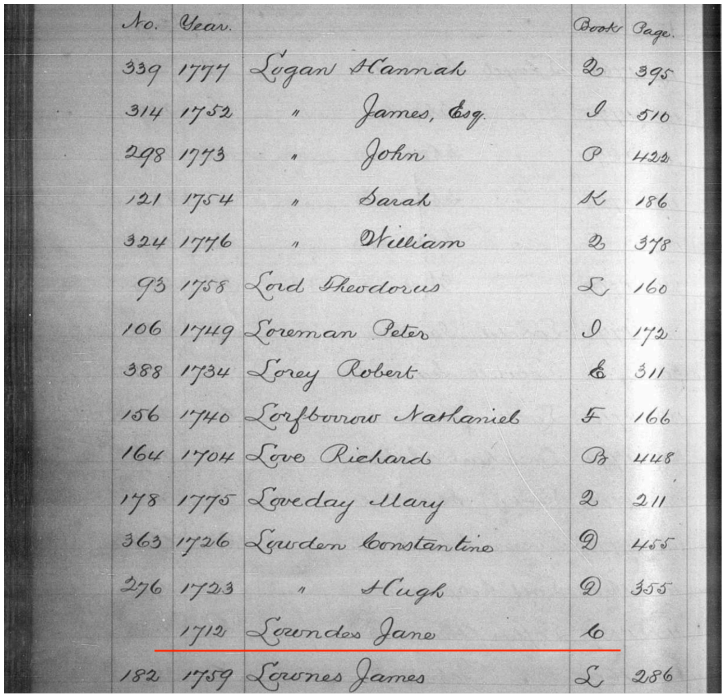
[4] Deed of Release: James Lownes to George Lownes. 29th Day, 3rd Month, 1716. Chester County PA Deed Book D, vol. 4, pp. 94–95.

the year 1712. If this refers to the same Jane Lownes, then she survived long enough to write her will in 1703 and died sometime before her estate was probated in 1712.



1703 Will of Jane Lownes

Release: James Lownes to George Lownes. 29th Day, 3rd Month, 1716. Several other dates mentioned within deed.
*Deed states Jane Lownes made her last will and testament 1st Day, 2nd Month, 1703.
*Chester County PA Deed Book D, volume 4, pages 94–95. FamilySearch.org.



No.	Year.		Book	Page.
339	1777	Logan Hannah	D	395
314	1752	" James, Esq.	I	510
298	1773	" John	P	422
121	1754	" Sarah	K	186
324	1776	" William	D	378
93	1758	Lord Theodorus	L	160
106	1749	Loreman Peter	I	172
388	1734	Lorey Robert	C	311
156	1740	Lorfborrow Nathaniel	F	166
164	1704	Love Richard	B	448
178	1775	Loveday Mary	D	211
363	1726	Lowden Constantine	G	455
276	1723	" Hugh	G	355
	1712	Lowndes Jane	C	
182	1759	Lownes James	L	286

Philadelphia PA Will Index Book FamilySearch.org

Jane Lowndes, Book C, no page number, filed in the year 1712

I looked in "Book C" and there are no page numbers. I looked through every page, and the will of Jane Lownes is not in there, for what FamilySearch has scanned.
It is possible it is filed elsewhere at Philadelphia City Hall, or it was lost. Back then, some wills from people who lived in present-day Delaware County were recorded in Philadelphia.

Per deed which mentions two of Jane's sons and herself, the deed states Jane wrote her will in 1703.

If this "Jane Lowndes filed 1712" is the same "Jane Lownes of Springfield" who wrote the 1703 will, then since this index indicates it was filed 1712, then her death date would probably be 1712, though she wrote her will 1703. But, this could be a different woman.

Memorial plaque honoring Jane Lownes. Springfield Friends Meeting House and Burial Ground, Springfield, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Photo taken by the author in 2021. There is no record of Jane's burial, but this would be the most logical place where she would be buried.

Sometime during the 1970s, the story of Jane's cave began to shift, and it was increasingly described as a natural rock formation rather than a man-made dwelling. Over time, legend blurred fact. In 2021, the author set out to correct the historical record by demonstrating that Jane's cave was, in fact, a man-made structure and not a natural rock formation. The research culminated in the article *Jane Lownes, One of the First Caucasian Settlers of Springfield Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, Now Delaware County, and Her Cave Dwelling in Which She Called Home*. In 2022, the article was nominated for a Delaware County Preservation Award in the Publication category and was selected as the winner!

Jane Lownes, One of the First Caucasian Settlers of Springfield Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, (Now Delaware County), and Her Cave Dwelling in Which She Called Home

By:
Carla Welsh (nee Seitz)
July 13, 2021

If you are a resident in Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, or live near the area, then you have likely heard the story of Jane Lownes aka the "Pioneer Mother of Springfield," who came to the New World as a widow and made it through the harsh Pennsylvania winter while living in a cave with her children. You may have wondered where the cave was, and if it still exists. You may have hiked the Springfield Trail, endlessly searching for natural rock formations that may have once been an appropriate cave dwelling. You may have wondered if her cave was located within Jane Lownes Park, Martin Forest, or more within the confinements of Smedley Park. Coming up short of a find, you may have eventually concluded that the story may not be real at all, and the cave never existed. Well, the nearly 340-year-old story of Jane and her cave is real, but not in the context one would think. So, what really is Jane's story, and where is her cave?

JANE'S ORIGIN AND HER FAMILY

Jane Lownes (nee Stretch) was amongst the first Caucasian settlers to be granted land in Springfield Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, in the latter part of the 17th century; in fact, she was the first woman to be granted land in the entire township. Jane was born in England circa 1638, assuming she was at least 20 years old at the time of her marriage. On 2 DEC 1658, Jane married Hugh Lownes in Leek Parish, Cheshire, England (Jordan 1911, 962).[1] The marriage record is thought to be filed in non-Conformist records in London. The known children of Jane and Hugh were James, George, Joseph, and Hannah Lownes.[2] Most women of Jane's era had 10 children each, so Jane likely had other children, besides the 4 known children, that probably succumbed to disease in infancy or early childhood and died young. Being that Jane and Hugh were married in 1658, their children were likely born between 1659-1675. Jane, Hugh, and their children were Quakers. It is said that Jane and Hugh suffered religious persecution for their beliefs, and Hugh was jailed in England. Jane may have also been jailed. It is also said that Hugh Lownes was well acquainted with William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. Oral traditions concerning Hugh's fate vary; some say he died in jail in England, while others say he fell sick while in jail and never recovered, and then died at sea while en route to the New World with Jane and their children.

JANE OBTAINS LAND

On 10 NOV 1682, 150 acres of land was surveyed to Jane, in the area of present-day Springfield Township, Delaware County (then Chester County), Pennsylvania, from Crum Creek

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[1] John W. Jordan, ed., *Colonial Families of Philadelphia* (New York, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1911), 2: 962, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/210884-colonial-families-of-philadelphia-vol-2 : accessed 12 JUL 2021).
[2] Ibid.

in the west, to beyond present-day West Sproul Road to Woodland Avenue in the east.[3] It is said that Jane was later patented the land in 1685. Lownes Run, now known as Whiskey Run, is a tributary of Crum Creek that runs parallel and south of Jane's property line. Lownes Run was not on Jane's tract of land, but on an adjacent landowner's tract of land, by the name of Peter Lester. A friendly Indigenous American community called the Lenni Lenape lived along Lownes Run, just south to southwest of Jane's dwelling house and cave-site. Many years after Jane died, it is said that the last family of Indigenous Americans to have had a wigwam along Lownes Run lived directly south of Jane's dwelling home (present day St. Kevin's Rectory), and north of Joseph Gibbons' home (present day Springfield Mall), up to as late as the 1770s, and their names were Andrew, Isaac, Betty, and Nanny.[4] Jane's tract of land encompassed present day Springfield Hospital, Saint Kevin's Parish, certain parts of the Springfield Country Club's golf course, and certain parts of Smedley Park, Martin Forest, and the Springfield Trail. A transcription of the aforesaid 1682 copied survey to Jane, transcribed by this compiler, is as follows:

10 NOV 1682
Layd out for Jane Loune 150 Acres of Land beginning at Petr. Lesters corner tree upon Crum Creek running 500 Perches and to Peter Lesters other corner tree from thence N 60 perches to a Red oke from thence SW_W to a chesnut tree by Crum Creek from thence A Long the Creek side one several corses to the first bounder.
By mee Charles Ashcom
T.H.
R.L. let this be done free she is poor: & a purchase.
Jane Louns 150 acres on Crum Creek, Chester County.
Returned ye 31st of March 85.
Entered in folio ye 74th.

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[3] Pennsylvania, Copied Survey Book D-74:119 & Reverse, assigned to Jane Loune, 10 NOV 1682; Copied Surveys, 1681-1912, RG-17, [series #17.114], digital images, *PHMC.Pa.gov* (http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17-114CopiedSurveyBooks/Books%20D1-D90/Book%20D74/Book%20D-74%20pg%20239.pdf : accessed 12 JUL 2021, http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17-114CopiedSurveyBooks/Books%20D1-D90/Book%20D74/Book%20D-74%20pg%20240.pdf : accessed 12 JUL 2021). Link to all pages in Vol. D-74, courtesy of *Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission:* http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17-114CopiedSurveyBooks/Books%20D1-D90/Book%20D74/r17-114%20BookD74%20Interface.htm.

[4] George Smith, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Henry Ashmead, 1862), 391-392, 400, digital images, *Archive.org* (https://archive.org/details/historyofdelaw00smit/mode/2up : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

JANE'S ARRIVAL TO THE NEW WORLD

Jane arrived upon the shores of the New World circa 1683, as a poor, recently widowed woman, probably in her mid 40s. Accompanying her were her 4 children, who were not little children, but young adults/teenagers. Her children's ages likely ranged between 13 to 23 years old. Oral tradition states the children were all over 16 years old. Jane and her children were amongst the many Quakers who left England and removed to Pennsylvania for religious freedom. Upon their arrival to Springfield, Jane and her children dug out and made a cave-home to live in as a temporary shelter, against the side of a hill, and lived there while they worked to build a small log cabin.[5] Jane's sons then built a bigger and better home of rock, which still stands today, and is now the rectory for St. Kevin's Parish on West Thomson Avenue, right off of West Sproul Road, in Springfield Township.[6] The cave-home was very close to the present day rectory.

Per Minutes record, Jane was in Chester County, Pennsylvania, (present day Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania), at least by 1684, and transcription (by this compiler) of the aforesaid record is as follows:[7]

Att A Monthly Meeting att Chester ye 2nd of 2nd month 1684:
Laid down by Thomas Brasey for Jane Lownes ten shillings and all that he hath in his hands Layd downe in the Womens meeting being ___ Sterling mony for the Use of Jane Lowns.

JANE WAS A QUAKER, AND QUAKERS BUILT CAVE-HOMES

As aforementioned, Jane and her family were Quakers. Quakers began their arrival in America as far back as the mid-17th century. In 1681, King Charles the 2nd, who was the King of England, Ireland, and Scotland, set forth a considerable land grant in America to a wealthy English Quaker, of which the royal family owed debt, by the name of William Penn. William Penn went on to become the founder of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania was a safe haven for those who practiced Quakerism. While safe in Pennsylvania from religious persecution, life was not easy, as early Quakers did have to contend with the primitive landscape, which consisted of

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[5] Gilbert Cope and Henry Graham Ashmead, *Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs of Chester and Delaware Counties, Pennsylvania,* (New York, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1904), 1:538, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/203997-historic-homes-and-institutions-and-genealogical-and-personal-memoirs-of-chester-and-delaware-counties-pennsylvania-v-1 : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

[6] Springfield Historical Society, *Images of America: Springfield Township, Delaware County* (Portsmouth, Charleston, Chicago, San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 15.

[7] "U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935," digital image s.v. "Jane Lownes, 1684," *Ancestry.com* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2189/images/31906_283952-00279 : accessed 12 JUL 2021). Original data: Swarthmore College; Swarthmore, Pennsylvania; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Minutes. Title: Media Records, Chester Monthly Meeting, Men's Minutes, 1681-1721, 4.

Indigenous American trails as the only paths to travel upon; having to deal with dangers from bears and wolves; having to build modest shelters and exist in harsh climates; having to forage and hunt for food; and of course, there was always the threat of infection and disease. Other inhabitants in Pennsylvania, besides Indigenous Americans, were the Swedes and Forest Finns, who were involved in the North American Fur Trade. An early cabin, built by either the Swedes or Forest Finns circa 1640-1650, is located about 4 miles east of Jane Lownes' cave-home and dwelling house, and it still stands today along the Darby Creek, known as the "Lower Swedish Cabin."[8]

The first Quakers in America took up residence all along the northeast coast, such as in the Provinces of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts Bay Colony. Massachusetts Bay Colony was not safe and of largely Puritan control, so most Quakers removed from that area and headed south. Early Quakers built "cave-homes" to live in as temporary shelters, while they worked to build bigger, better homes of tree logs or rocks. Early cave-homes have been largely referred to as "caves," and this is where the confusion of Jane Lownes' "cave" comes from, because when one hears the word "cave," one thinks of a large, natural rock formation, and it appears that Jane's "cave" was not natural, but man-made. In George Smith's *History of Delaware County*, he wrote that the cave was "built" (Smith 1862, 480).[9] This indicates the cave was man-made. Jane's cave was not yet filled in at the time that Dr. Smith's book was published, so he would be of a more credible source than writers who succeeded him in the 20th century. In Charles Browning's *Welsh Settlement of Pennsylvania*, he wrote that Jane's cave was a "natural rock grotto," but that was likely hearsay (Browning 1912, 315).[10] Elsewhere, in Little Egg Harbor Township, Burlington County, Province of West New Jersey, Quaker brothers Mordecai and Edward Andrews also built cave-homes as temporary shelters, circa 1699. They are another pair of early Quaker settlers with the same mixed up cave legend as Jane Lownes, where the story has been misconstrued that they lived in a natural rock cave, when it was, in fact, a man-made shelter, such as the one that Jane lived in. An author by the name of Leah Blackman wrote the only basic genealogy for the area that the Andrews brothers lived in, and she wrote that the Andrews cave was "dug in the ground like a cellar and walled with cedar logs and covered with hewn timber of the same material" (Blackman 1880, 256).[11]

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[8] The Lower Swedish Cabin is located on Creek Road in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. To access the trail from Springfield Township's side, the trail entrance is towards the end of Indian Rock Park, on Rosemont Avenue, in between North Bishop Avenue and Bloomfield Avenue, along the Darby Creek. For further information, see the website provided by *Friends of the Swedish Cabin* (https://swedishcabin.info/ : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

[9] Smith, *History of Delaware County,* 480.

[10] Charles H. Browning, *Welsh Settlement of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1912), 315, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/572152-welsh-settlement-of-pennsylvania : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

[11] *Proceedings, Constitution, By-Laws, List of Members of the Surveyor's Association of West New Jersey. With Historical and Biographical Sketches Relating to New Jersey* (Camden: Order

Quaker cave-homes were generally built into river bluffs or steep hills that had about a 30-degree angle. One wall of small tree logs would probably have been built into the part of the hill that headed downhill. A large rectangular or square area would be dug out in between the wall of logs and the part of the hill headed uphill. The area dug out would be about four feet deep or more. A chimney built of rocks and clay would have probably attached at the furthest end to provide heat and fire for cooking within the shelter, or a fire pit probably would have been built adjacent to the shelter with a hole dug through to connect. A tree would likely be near the shelter to help blow smoke away. The cave-homes were ground level, with only a small portion above ground, and the part of the roof that was above ground would have probably been covered with sod, sticks, and leaves. Basically, the shelter would be somewhat of a large Dakota fire hole, that was big enough to sleep in. To build the shelter, all one would need was a shovel, axe, pickaxe, and a little bit of blood, sweat, and tears.

Per *Minutes Book C*, commencing about the year of 1685, in concern with the Philadelphia region, William Penn ordered everyone out of the caves within two months' time, because the cave-homes were becoming brothels and places of overt intoxication.[12] This compiler has not found record of orders to stop using caves in the present day Delaware County region, but early settlers were probably eager to build better houses, and get out of their cave-homes, so that they no longer had to share such cramped living quarters amongst the earthworms, mice, and other little creatures that go bump in the night.

THE LOCATION OF JANE'S CAVE-HOME, AND THE CAVE-SITE MARKER

Jane's property stayed within the Lownes family for several generations. In 1789, Jane's descendants erected a marker at the site of the cave-home, and it bore an inscription towards the memory of Jane and her cave.[13] The marker was engraved as "Jane Lowne Cave Dwelling

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of the Society, 1880. Printer, S. Chew); article within by Leah Blackman, *History of Little Egg Harbor Township, Burlington County, NJ, from its First Settlement to the Present Time, Comprising the Genealogy of Many of its Inhabitants, Together with Short Biographies of Eminent Characters, and Most Events Worthy of Remembrance*, 256, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/358985-proceedings-constitution-by-laws-list-of-members-etc-of-the-surveyors-association-of-west-new-jersey-with-historical-and-biographical-sketches-relating-to-new-jerseyn : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

[12] William Henry Egle, ed., *Minutes of the Board of Property of the Province of Pennsylvania,* (Harrisburg: E.K. Meyers, 1893), 1:10-20, digital images, *FamilySearch.org,* (https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/100595-minutes-of-the-board-of-property-of-the-province-of-pennsylvania : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

[13] "Old Diary Indicates Cave Marker in Springfield Placed in 1789." *Chester Times*, Chester, 27 DEC 1956, 35, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1956/12-27/page-35/ : accessed 12 JUL 2021). Information of the marker placement was obtained from the 1789 diary

1685."[14] The location of the cave-home and marker was very close to present day St. Kevin's Rectory, and just south of it. St. Kevin's Rectory is located at the very end of West Thomson Road, behind St. Kevin's School, off West Sproul Road, in Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. All sources state the cave-home and marker were south of St. Kevin's Rectory, but there is debate on how far south of St. Kevin's Rectory they were located. Per Ashmead's *History of Delaware County*, he wrote that the cave was located 100 yards south to southwest of the old mansion house (which is now St. Kevin's Rectory), and that the inscription of the marker was engraved as, "Jane Lownes, her cave and dwelling, 1684" (Ashmead 1884, 714).[15] This is interesting, because this compiler has personally seen the marker, and that is close but not exact of what the marker is engraved as; thus, this proves that Ashmead never personally saw the marker, and his description of it being 100 yards southwest of present day St. Kevin's Rectory was just hearsay. On the other hand, James Davis, former President of the Springfield Historical Society and former Curator of the Springfield Heritage Museum, did personally see the marker, as he used to run historic tours in Springfield to the site.[16] In an article in the *Delaware County Daily Times*, James told the newspaper that the actual site of the cave-home was filled in under the driveway leading to the home of Edward J. Walsh, about 400 yards off Sproul Road, and south of St. Kevin's Rectory (Skidmore 1964, 43).[17] This compiler has personally been to St. Kevin's Rectory, and it is about 400 yards off Sproul Road, at the end of West Thomson Avenue. Edward J. Walsh's home is now St. Kevin's Rectory. West Thomson Avenue is the driveway that leads directly to the front door of the rectory, but if looking at the rectory, and to the left of it, the driveway also branches out to the side. By looking at aerial images, it appears that the part of the driveway that branches out to the side used to extend further out to other buildings south of St. Kevin's Rectory that are no longer there; thus, the side driveway would now be under Springfield Hospital's parking garage, or under the area of the

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of Elizabeth Drinker, in possession of the Springfield Heritage Museum, from her journal entry dated 20 JAN 1789.

[14] The cave-site marker is now located at the Springfield Township Building, Powell Road, Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and this compiler has personally seen it.

[15] Henry Graham Ashmead, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1884. Facsimile Edition by Concord Township Historical Society, Chester: John Spencer, Inc., 1968), 714, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/589126-history-of-delaware-county-pennsylvania : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

[16] "Reviving Springfield's History: Tour of Historical Spots to Be Held Tomorrow." *Chester Times*, Chester, 2 DEC 1955, 14, digital images, NewspaperArchive.com (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1955/12-02/page-14/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[17] Arden Skidmore. "Springfield Museum Sentimental Holds Intimate History Out of Delco Past." *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 22 FEB 1964, 43, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1964/02-22/page-43/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

ticket booth to get into the parking garage, and this was probably the part of the driveway that James Davis was referring to, so the exact location of the cave-home and marker was probably closer to St. Kevin's Rectory, and much less than 100 yards south of it, as to what Ashmead suggested. Either way, the site of the cave-home and marker would now be under land owned by Springfield Hospital, and probably under the parking garage area.

The cave-site marker is currently in the lobby of the Springfield Township Building on Powell Road. Hanging on the wall above the marker, is an original photo of the marker in the ground, before Edward J. Walsh had removed it and donated it to the Springfield Heritage Museum. The photo is just a picture of the marker, in the ground, surrounded by grass. Above that photo, is a framed writing someone had typed of some basic information of Jane, but it is inaccurate, as it says, "…Jane Lownes and her children were reported to have spent the winter in a limestone cave in the vicinity of where St. Kevin's rectory now stands." This is inaccurate because the cave was not a natural rock formation, but man-made. Also, there is no limestone on Jane's tract of land; in fact, there is no limestone in all of Delaware County.[18]

NEW OWNERSHIP OF JANE'S PROPERTY

During the 1940s, Edward J. Walsh, and Inez Cline Walsh, his wife, became in possession of the property formerly owned by Jane Lownes.[19] Edward and Inez moved into Jane's dwelling house, built circa 1685, which is now the rectory for St. Kevin's Parish. Edward J. Walsh was a prosperous builder and President of Marlyn Construction Company. He donated many of the parks in Springfield, including Walsh Park, which was named after him. The cave-home, at that time, was just an indentation in the ground, with only the erected marker to really identify its existence. Without the marker, one would not have known a "cave-home" was once located there.[20]

Edward J. Walsh and Inez Cline Walsh, his wife, of Springfield Township, were quitclaimed 100 acres, 3 rods, and 33/100 and 58/100 perches of land, more or less, on 13 OCT 1947, from Joseph H. Murray, and Margaret H., his wife, of Lower Merion, Montgomery

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[18] J.H. Barnes and W.D. Sevon, 2002, *The Geological Story of Pennsylvania* (3rd ed.): Pennsylvania Geological Survey, 4th ser., Educational Series 4, 44, image 28: *Geologic Map of Pennsylvania*, digital image, *Water-Research.net* (https://water-research.net/Waterlibrary/geologicdata/geology.pdf : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[19] "Historic Site at Springfield." *Chester Times*, Chester, 3 SEP 1942, p. 7, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1942/09-03/page-7/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[20] "Home School at Swarthmore." *Chester Times*, Chester, 14 APR 1931, p. 3, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1931/04-14/page-3/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

County, Pennsylvania, for the sum of $1.00.[21] Within this deed, there is mention of former property owners and adjacent property owners, such as J. Howard Lewis, Frank R. Tobey, the heirs of Joseph Gibbons, John Ogden, the heirs of Oliver Holt, and the Springfield Water Company, etc. The deed mentions a survey made by Damon and Foster, Civil Engineers, dated 23 MAR 1938, so that may be when Edward J. Walsh was first surveyed the land, which is the process before the final patent or final transaction occurs. Unfortunately, the deed does not mention anything about the cave-home. This compiler has read through many land records of this area, from 1682 up to about 1980, in the hopes that at least one land record would have mentioned the cave-home, but it is not mentioned in any of the records. This does make sense, however, because the cave-home was within the property, and not along the border, and land records only really list measurements of property borders, and not the specific structures within, unless they are large buildings, generally speaking.

JANE'S CAVE HOME FILLED IN BY NEW PROPERTY OWNERS

In 1947, Edward J. Walsh began renovations of his new home. Jane's cave-home was filled in under his side driveway about that time. An aerial image from 1937, before Edward owned the property, shows structures that used to exist south of present-day St. Kevin's Rectory, and Jane's cave-home would have been in that area.[22] It appears a dirt path led from present day St. Kevin's Rectory to that area, and that was probably the part of the driveway that Edward had filled in. Edward J. Walsh donated the cave marker to the Springfield Heritage Museum shortly thereafter.

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[21] Delaware Co., PA, Deed Book 1418:478-480, Murray to Walsh, 13 October 1947, digital images, *DelcoPa.gov* (https://delcopa.gov : accessed 13 JUL 2021) < click "Public Access" < click "Recorder of Deeds System" < click "Login as Guest" < click "Accept" < click "Search Public Records" < click "Index to Deeds 1800 - 1948" < type "Walsh" in the box which says "Surname/Corporation" < click on any link to enter Volume 1418, then enter page 478, etc.

[22] 1937 aerial image, PASDA, Pennsylvania Imagery Navigator, *PSU.edu* (http://maps.psiee.psu.edu/ImageryNavigator/ : accessed 12 JUL 2021). In order to view aerial images, one must enable FTP URLs from Google Chrome, by typing *chrome://flags* in the browser, and then changing the "default" option to "enabled," which is next to "Enable Support for FTP URLs."

On 13 MAR 1956, Edward J. Walsh sold his home and 11 acres of his land on West Thomson and West Sproul Roads to Father John J. McGovern for $150,000.00.[23] Edward's home became the rectory for St. Kevin's Parish, and a school was built next to the rectory.[24] [25]

On 21 OCT 1959, Edward J. Walsh and his wife, Inez Cline Walsh, sold the land south of St. Kevin's Rectory to Tri-County Hospital, Inc., for $40,000.00, to build a hospital.[26] The hospital was built shortly thereafter, and it is now the present-day Springfield Hospital on West Sproul Road. Aerial images show that the parking lot, in the back of the hospital, was originally just an open lot to park in. The parking garage was not built on top of the parking lot until years later.

DESCENDANTS OF JANE DESCRIBE WHAT THE CAVE LOOKED LIKE

In 1973, Margaret Lownes Conover, a 76-year-old Quaker, and direct descendant of Jane Lownes, was interviewed for an article in the *Delaware County Daily Times*, and she discussed what Jane's "cave" looked like. Margaret said, "...it wasn't really a cave, but really a house built against a hill. In those days, it was called a cave. The front part of the house was level with the ground, and the rear part had no windows" (Reilly 1973, 14).[27] Margaret grew up in Springfield, and she was alive to see the cave-home before it was filled in under Edward J. Walsh's driveway. Margaret died shortly after the article was written, and she is buried in Springfield Friends Burial Ground, on Old Sproul and Springfield Roads, Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Also buried there is no other than Jane Lownes, herself. Affixed to the

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[23] Delaware Co., PA, Deed Book 1816:176-177, Walsh to McGovern, 13 March 1956, digital images, *DelcoPa.gov* (https://delcopa.gov : accessed 13 JUL 2021) < click "Public Access" < click "Recorder of Deeds System" < click "Login as Guest" < click "Accept" < click "Search Public Records" < click "Index to Deeds 1800 - 1948" < type "Walsh" in the box which says "Surname/Corporation" < click on any link to enter Volume 1816, then enter p. 176, etc.

[24] "Historic Site Selected for New Catholic Parish." *Chester Times*, Chester, 3 October 1955, 12, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1955/10-03/page-12/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[25] "New School Will Have 8 Rooms." *Chester Times*, Chester, 23 March 1956, 19, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1956/03-23/page-19/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[26] Delaware Co., PA, Deed Book 2009:274-281, Walsh to Tri-County Hospital, Inc., 21 October 1959, digital images, *DelcoPa.gov* (https://delcopa.gov : accessed 13 JUL 2021) < click "Public Access" < click "Recorder of Deeds System" < click "Login as Guest" < click "Accept" < click "Search Public Records" < click "Index to Deeds 1800 - 1948" < type "Walsh" in the box which says "Surname/Corporation" < click on any link to enter Volume 2009, then enter p. 274, etc.

[27] Linda Reilly. "Early Springfield Settler's Kin Talks of Earliest Days." *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 22 August 1973, 14, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1973/08-22/page-14/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

cemetery gate entrance, is a plaque dedicated to the memory of Jane.[28] The Springfield Friends Meeting House is on the same property adjacent to the burial ground, and in the front of the meeting house, and not in the burial ground, are buried runaway slaves (Skidmore 1964, 47).[29] Many Indigenous Americans are buried there, too, as other cemeteries would not take "non-whites" in (Reilly 1973, 14).[30] The rather small burial ground has been estimated to have approximately 5,000 people buried in it, 4 graves deep (Skidmore 1964, 47).[31]

In 1974, Joseph Lownes, a Springfield resident and direct descendant of Jane, who was in his mid 60s, was also interviewed in an article for the *Delaware County Daily Times*. Joseph said, "...the cave she lived in was on the side of the hill where Tri-County Hospital now stands. A way of identifying it was by an impression in the land and a marker placed on the site that said: Jane Lownes Cave Dwelling, 1685" (*Delaware County Daily Times* 1974, 21).[32] Tri-County Hospital is now Springfield Hospital, located on West Sproul Road, and south of St. Kevin's Rectory.

A SUMMARY OF JANE AND HER CAVE-HOME

As aforementioned, Jane Lownes and her family were Quakers that left England in search of religious freedom. Jane arrived in the New World as a middle-aged widow with older children, circa 1683. Jane was granted a tract of land in Springfield Township, Chester County (now Delaware County), Pennsylvania. Jane and her children built a cave-home to live in as a temporary shelter, while her sons worked to build a better home which still stands today, and it is now the rectory for St. Kevin's Parish on West Thomson Road, built circa 1685. The cave-home

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[28] Jane Lownes, memorial plaque, Springfield Friends Burial Ground, Springfield, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, digital images s.v. "Jane Lownes," *FindaGrave.com* (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/215157110/jane-lownes : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[29] Arden Skidmore. "Springfield Group Almost Faded: 1 Family Attended Services, Meeting Now Has 102." *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 29 FEB 1964, 47, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1964/02-29/page-47/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[30] Linda Reilly. "Early Springfield Settler's Kin Talks of Earliest Days." *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 22 August 1973, 14, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1973/08-22/page-14/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[31] Arden Skidmore. "Springfield Group Almost Faded: 1 Family Attended Services, Meeting Now Has 102." *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 29 February 1964, 47, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1964/02-29/page-47/ : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

[32] "Lowneses Make Mark." *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 1 July 1974, 21, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1974/07-01/page-21/.)

was mostly underground, with only a small portion above ground, and was located about 400 yards in from West Sproul Road, and south of St. Kevin's Rectory. Jane's property went through several landowners, and eventually Edward J. Walsh, a wealthy builder, ended up with the property. In 1947, he started renovations and filled the cave in under his side driveway. Edward donated the cave-site marker, erected in 1789 by Jane's descendants, to the Springfield Heritage Museum. The marker is now in the lobby of the Springfield Township Building on Powell Road. The site of the cave-home is now approximately underneath Springfield Hospital's parking garage. Jane's final resting spot is in Springfield Friends Meeting House and Burial Ground, along with many other early settlers of the area. While Jane's cave-home has been forever filled in, her story is certainly worthy to have been "dug up." Alas, this compiler would have preferred a different ending, and for the cave to have been a natural rock formation that still existed, but history is history, and that is that.

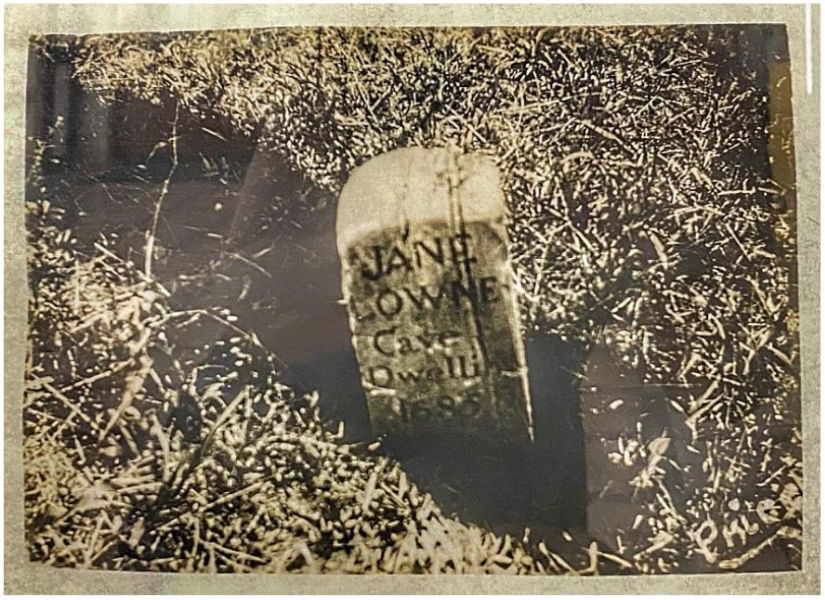

Photo taken by this compiler, of the original photo hanging in the township building.

Photo of the marker taken by this compiler. The marker is in the lobby of the Springfield Township Office building located on Powell Road, Springfield, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

THE HERITAGE COMMISSION OF DELAWARE COUNTY
Awards this Certificate of Appreciation
For: Jane Lownes… And Her Cave Dwelling in Which She Called Home
To: Carla Welsh
Category: Publications
In recognition of Outstanding Contributions to Historic Preservation in Delaware County
Chairman, Heritage Commission
5/7/22
Date
Chairman, Delaware County Council
5/7/22
Date

Delaware County Preservation Award, Publications category, presented to the author in 2022 for her article on the cave of Jane Lownes.

"Every cave is an entrance to forgotten history."
~ Carla Welsh